

Comp-Talk

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I am here today to urge the commission to allow more time for citizens and neighborhood associations to read and evaluate the over 500 policies presented in the draft of Portland's two-thousand-thirty-five Comprehensive Plan.

The draft was released in late July when many people were out of town and neighborhood association meetings were sparsely attended. Since most neighborhood associations meet on a monthly bases, and some do not even meet at all during the summer, there has been time for at most two meetings since the release. That is insufficient time for neighborhoods to identify and consider their concerns. Moreover, crucial aspects of the Plan, such as so called "Campus/Institutional Zones" and "Mixed Use Zones" are not yet completely defined. Please follow the advise of the several neighborhoods and the Coalition of Southwest Neighborhoods, SWNI, who have written in support of the idea, that the draft should not be submitted for approval until ninety days after all zones and all parts of the Plan are completely defined.

In my neighborhood, Multnomah, we have been reading the plan and we feel that there is still a lot to be done! For one thing, much of the language is garbled and open to multiple interpretations. As an example I cite Goal 1.D on page GP1-4. Though too complicated to discuss in detail here, you will need to make a diagram to parse the four sentences in the paragraph. In part, it seems to say that the city will seek opportunities to quote "promote innovation" end-quote. Although this may seem to be an unassailably desirable goal, with the close juxtaposition of other concerns in the paragraph, it seems likely that the intent is to encourage developers in whatever novel interpretations they are able to concoct to aid them in their business pursuits. This seems incompatible with the goal of real citizen participation.

This example is just one of a large number of paragraphs that need line-by-line rewrites. Again, this is going to take some time, but for a document intended to have sway for twenty years, the citizens of Portland need to take this time!

Another more difficult aspect of citizen review, is the need to identify and address the Plan's significant omissions. Here I will mention just one. Noise.

Noise is unhealthy for Portland's citizens. It is produced by freeways, industrial operations, and the considerable and on-going construction that is anticipated.

For me it is very important that it be addressed and that methods of measuring and controlling it be identified.

Please give us Portlanders the time we need to evaluate, modify, and enhance, this important document that will so much affect the quality of life in the city we live in.

Thank you.